



**Himalayan Light Foundation's
South Asia Regional NGO Consortium
for RETs and Poverty Reduction**

(Best practice sharing and program replication for innovative RET deployment for the poorest of the poor and RET uses for poverty alleviation)

**FINAL REPORT
(JANUARY 12, 2004 – JANUARY 11, 2005)**

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**Prepared and Submitted
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1. Introduction:

The Himalayan Light Foundation, (HLF) was established with the main objective of assuring that RET use, specifically for income generation and vital service provision, is increased in the Himalayan and South Asian region. HLF is expanding its activities to assist other organizations with overlapping objectives. Several successful regional NGO programs have demonstrated significant and innovative methods, program designs and practices which can play a major role in the increased accessibility of RETs for the remote and vulnerable populations of the South Asia region as well as assuring energy security for vulnerable populations. Some of these NGO programs focus on both RETs and poverty alleviation as an integrated core of their implementation. Unfortunately, many of these exemplary programs along with the positive learning experiences are retained solely in their country of origin and have not had the opportunity to be adapted or replicated in the region.

In order to assure the increased use and application of these best practices and programs, the Himalayan Light Foundation has collaborated to form the region's first NGO consortium which specifically focuses on RET proliferation for poverty reduction and productive end uses. The consortium aims to actually replicate and adapt successful and innovative RET dissemination programs with the consortium partners, Sewalanka Foundation and Tarayana Foundation in Sri Lanka and Bhutan respectively.

To date, consortium partners have completed several rounds of experience sharing in the involved countries and have formulated plans for program operation in their own countries. Significant support has also been obtained in stakeholder groups in each case. In particular the Solar Sisters™ volunteer corps program of The Himalayan Light Foundation has now been successfully replicated in Sri Lanka with potential volunteer's sites available on the HLF web site: www.hlf.org.np Additionally, HLF's Home Employment and Lighting Package™ (HELP™) is also slated for imminent replication in Sri Lanka with Sewalanka as the collaborative partner. Further conclusive replication activities will continue well into 2006.

The SARI/Energy supported project has therefore completed measurable strides towards increased dissemination of RETs for vulnerable populations of the region. As a direct result of the consortium's activities in both Sri Lanka and Bhutan, several organizations and institutions became familiar with the unique, innovative and integrated mechanisms of various NGO programs operating in different countries in the region. As these innovative strategies were interdisciplinary they straddled both organizations with a focus on village poverty alleviation as well as those which focus on RET dissemination at various levels along the supply / support path.

2. Program aim and objectives:

The objectives of the NGO consortium program funded by SARI were:

- To bring three NGOs into regional NGO consortium for experience and best practice sharing and the actual cross-pollination of important successful RET dissemination programs.
- Allow various regional partner NGOs to share ongoing experiences on programs which practically address energy concerns specific to the South Asia region namely their remote disbursed poor populations and logistical and financial limitation of standard electricity supply for such populations.
- Creating a catalyst arena for the actual replication of successful regional example operative programs which will actually increase small-scale RET system dissemination in villages within the modalities of these proven programs.
- Availing a sustainable base for other like-objective NGOs in the South Asia region to join the consortium to form a comprehensive force in future regional meetings, workshops, seminars and activities geared towards the above energy, innovative RET financing mechanisms and sustainable livelihood issues.

3. Achievements and outcome:

3.1 Signing of agreements between SARI Energy and MoU with regional partners:

An agreement between Himalayan Light Foundation (HLF) and the SARI/ Energy (Winrock International) was signed on February 4, 2004 to carry out the planned activities agreed between the organizations. Two memorandums of understanding (MoU) were signed between Himalayan Light Foundation (HLF) Nepal and the regional partners, Sewa Lanka Foundation (SLF) Sri Lanka and Tarayana Foundation of Bhutan. These MoU's served as the base declaration for carrying out the agreed planned activities between the partners and support organizations within the program period. The signing of these agreements also helped to clarify the projected outcome of the program both in activity and for long-term program continuance.

3.2 Coordination and exchange visits among partner organizations:

An exchange visit among three partners was organized in such a way that all three partners could share their experiences, expectations and understand each others activities which will helped them develop an implementation plan for the projected activities. This meeting practically addressed energy concerns specific to the South Asia region; namely their remote disbursed poor populations and logistical and financial limitation of standard electricity supply for such populations. Creative solutions for launching projects that address these specific energy needs as well assistance in micro-financing system design towards poverty reduction were also discussed. As a direct result

of the initial exchanges between the partner and support organizations, two of HLF's innovative programs for rural electrification and micro financing such as Solar Sisters™ (SS™) and Home Employment and Lighting Package™ (HELP™) program have been chosen by the consortium partners for adaptation / replication in both the partner countries.

Visit to and from Sri Lanka and Bhutan:

Based on the above resulting plan and activities, HLF team made a first round visit to Sri Lanka and Bhutan and conducted meetings and interaction programs with potential stakeholders in those partner countries. After discussion with both the country partners, the first visit was made in Sri Lanka from April 25th 2004 for 10 days. During that time, Sewalanka Foundation organized in-house meetings, a stake-holders' workshop and follow-up meetings with perspective supporters of our program replication efforts.

The visit to Bhutan was made on beginning of June 2004. This trip enabled both the partner organizations to start up coordination and contact work with their country level donor organizations for future projects in the country.

Likewise, the representatives, Mr. Lal Fernando of Sewa Lanka Foundation, Sri Lanka and Ms. Tshering Yangzom of Tarayana Foundation, Bhutan visited Nepal in the first week of September 2004. During their stay in Nepal, the following activities were conducted for sharing expertise and knowledge which was crucial at the early stages of actual program adaptation / replication design in the respective countries.

- i. Hands on training on Solar Sisters™ program Management and HELP™ micro credits management and practices
- ii. HELP™ Project site visit for observation and interaction with village community participants. (West Nepal)
- iii. Trip to local paper factory to observe the village paper making processes and the necessary machinery.
- iv. Stakeholders' National workshop with National level stakeholders such as Global Environmental Facility (GEF UNDP Nepal), His Majesty's Government Nepal's Alternative Energy Promotion Center, UNDP's Renewable Energy Development Program (REDP), Winrock International's Renewable Energy Project Support Office (REPSO) and several other smaller stakeholders.

I. Hands on training on SS™ and HELP™:

A full day hands-on training on Solar Sisters™ and Home Employment and Lighting Package™ program management and implementation was organized for the partner's representatives in Nepal. During the training, both the representatives enquired about the HLF real experiences in implementing such program in the community and the community response toward the programs.

On this enquiry Mr. Suprabhat Basnyat HLF Program Assistant and Mr. Samir Newa, Program support officers share their first hand experience while interfacing the communities with the program. They also presented several techniques required for social mobilization and also shared case stories about how people react when they were first briefed about the program objectives and activities along with the district level officers and community members. The training was facilitated by Mr. Adam Friedensohn, Mrs. Sapana Shakya and Mr. Yadav Gurung.



Suprabhat Basnyat talking about SSP social mobilization Techniques



Samir Newa giving training on RET micro enterprise and HELP

II. Project site visit for observation and interaction:

After the training in Kathmandu the consortium partner representatives were taken to Baglung for project site visit and interaction with the community who are directly involved in the HLF's HELP™ program. The trip duration was five days including travel days. The group reached Baglung, the district headquarters and prepared to trek to the Paper and Power project in remote Lekhani village but due to the current situation in the area permission was required from the Maoists group to take foreign nationals to the village and so the trip to Lekhani village became impractical. A decision was made by the coordinators of the interaction and the project management group (SDC) and the villagers were called to Baglung for the interaction as an alternative. The meetings and interaction program with the project management group and villagers was conducted in Baglung Bazaar so that the representatives could interact with the villagers and pose their questions directly to the villagers themselves. The partner representatives were very impressed with the community group members witnessing their drive, project ownership and commitment to the program and how they were empowered by the project. Despite not making it to the remote village itself, the trip was successful as the consortium representatives had ample opportunity to interact with the locals, learned quite a lot about the program from the villager's point of view and also gained confidence in the program modalities and design features. Similarly the villagers sharing of their experiences allowed the consortium members to contemplate elements of the adaptation to their own country situations.

III. Paper factory visit to observe the paper making process

A day trip to a nearby paper factory was very handy for the consortium partners to observe the processes and machinery required for village paper making. The paper

factory named “Natural Paper Crafts” is owned by the instructor for the paper making training in HELP™ “Paper and Power” project.



Learning about the machinery, Instructor Ichchya B. Karki with the Group paper drying



Demonstration of Stationary making



Mr. Lal Fernando & Adam Friedensohn making paper

During the trip the representatives also did some hands on experience on making paper and all the processes up to stationary making.



Ms. Tshering Yangzom & Mrs. Sapana Shakya, learning to make paper

iv. Stakeholder's National workshop:

A half day stakeholders workshop was organized in Kathmandu for various Government, bi-lateral and non governmental organization with an objective to inform, familiarize and support their feedback and future cooperation in program and also to create platform for

the Representatives from Sri Lanka and Nepal and Nepal stakeholders to interact and learn about RETs in Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bhutan.

Three presentations were made from HLF, Sewalanka and Tarayana in the workshop. HLF's presentation was mainly about its programs in brief and about the consortium and achievement from consortium so far and future activities. Sewalanka and Tarayana Foundations presented using a similar presentation template developed by HLF and the partners for the uniformity among the consortium member organizations. The presentation contained introductions of the organizations and activities, how HELP™ and Solar Sisters™ objectives fits in and overlaps with their organization's activities and what they expected from further consortium activities in the future.

The program was chaired by the Executive Director, Dr. Madan Bahadur Basnyat of HMG/N Alternative Energy Promotion Center and the special guests were Founder/Chief Advisor, Mr. Adam Friedensohn of Himalayan Light Foundation, and the representatives from partner organizations, Sewalanka Foundation and Tarayana Foundation. The workshop was moderated by Mrs. Sapana Shakya, Director/President of Himalayan Light Foundation.



Mrs. Sapana Shakya, Director/President delivering welcome speech!
From left to right (Mr. Lal Fernando, Mr. Adam Friedensohn, Dr. Madan B. Basnyat, AEPC, Mrs. Sapana Shakya, and Ms. Tshering Yangzom)



Launching the workshop by lighting the consortium light by the Chief Guest Dr. Basnyat, Mr. Friedenshon and Mr. Gopal Raj Sherchan GEF-SGP National Coordinator and by other the Key stakeholders

The participant guests were from 14 organizations such as; AEPC, USAID, UNDP/GEF-SGP, Winrock International, the European Commission, ESAP DANIDA, REDP, WWF and CEN.



Ms. Tshering Yangzom, presenting at the workshop



Workshop participants from various governmental and bi-Lateral organisations

After the presentations, a question and answer session was conducted and inputs from the participants were obtained for the formulation of the consortium's future activity plans. Largely, the participants felt that more of this type of workshop should be encouraged, and some added that drawing more local Nepal technologies into the stakeholder's mix would have far reaching benefits in regards to increasing RET use for poverty alleviation. The national coordinator of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) / Small Grants Program announced that GEF is trying to launch a regional program fund which can bring tremendous support at the time of actual HELP™ replication in Sri Lanka and Bhutan.

The workshop was successful with active and encouraging participation from many organizations with interest on supporting on HLF's efforts in regional expansion. The forum suggested that such type of workshop should be held with larger group where various level of stakeholders should be invited, which will help to recognize the initiative of HLF for higher and better response nationally and regionally.

The overall program outcome was very encouraging both for HLF and the regional consortium partners as they all had a full opportunity to interact with both the government level policy makers group as well as bi-lateral organizations who has shown keen interest in supporting regional expansion of best practices. Partner representatives also learned about first-hand experiences and elements of the possible replication of HLF's projects by the key staff and community level stakeholders.

4. The Way Forward:

4.1 General Description

The project was geared towards availing an ongoing creative solution sharing of experiences between three regional NGOs representing Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka and concerned stakeholders groups towards the adoption and actual replication of successful programs that target the poorest of the poor with RET services using creative innovative small-scale financing mechanisms and income generation.

This SARI / Energy portion of the activity has come into its last phase of final regional visits to both Sri Lanka and Bhutan respectively. The activities accomplished on these final visits are enumerated herein.

4.2 Sri Lanka

Sewa Lanka Foundation:

The relation between HLF and the Consortium member, Sewalanka Foundation, was able to reach a high level of maturity due to this SARI/ Energy Small Grant Program funding. The last and final visit of the HLF representative was accomplished on 31st October 2004 and several project objectives and activities were accomplished during this final visit.

One of the main outputs of the consortium proposal for this SARI funded Activity was to develop and submit joint and collaborative proposals for the actual replication of programs which disseminate RETS to the more vulnerable populations.

Work meetings were held to discuss the elements required for joint proposal submission on topics such as:

1. Financing mechanism for RETs in the HELP™ context
2. Technology choices
3. Development of activity pairing, roles and responsibility roster
4. Budget development for the proposed activities
5. Confirmation of submission modalities
6. Final selection of donors to submit proposals to
7. Actual final submissions of completed collaborative proposals

After these issues were considered and developed in detail, both HLF and SLF were able to develop and finalize two substantial proposals to both the Global Environmental Facility's Small Grants Program (GEF/SGP) and also to the World Bank's RERED program for RETs for Poverty Reduction. The proposals contain requests for support and activities such as the actual village level commencement of, The Home Employment and Lighting Package™ (HELP™) program in Sri Lanka along with support for technical assistance and training from HLF Nepal.

Additionally, a third proposal was developed for the replication of the Renewable Energy Traveling Education Center™, (RE-TEC™) in Sri Lanka at the request of Sewalanka Foundation for use in the HELP™ project community mobilization and to assist their works with provincial councils and work in conflict and resettlement areas of the country. This proposal was submitted to SARI Energy and later approved.

4.3 Meetings Completed:

Further alignment and coordination meetings were completed with Sewalanka Foundation's Enterprise Development Section, to assure their future role in the actual HELP™ program operation and including them into the proposal activities for commercially-based income generation schemes for villager's poverty alleviation.

Additional follow-up meetings were held between HLF, SLF and Mr. Jayantha Nagendran Senior Vice President (Project Management), RERED (a World Bank (DFCC BANK) / GEF / RET project) and Ms. Shireen Samarasuriya, National Coordinator, Global Environment Fund (GEF) Small Grants Program.



Left to Right; Ms. Shireen Samarasuriya-GEF SGP, Mr. Jayantha Nagendran-RERED, Mr. Lal Fernando- SLF, Ms. Sapana Shakya & Mr. Adam Friedensohn HLF

As a direct result of these interactions, Mr. Nagendran made a special trip to Nepal to better assess the local realities of the HELP™ program operation and gain detailed information on the proposed paper making activities for Sri Lanka. Mr. Nagendran visited HLF office in December 1, 2004 and became deeply familiar with several of HLF's ongoing programs and staff. During this trip Mr. Nagendran had a chance to sit with HLF staff to clarify several questions about HELP™ modality in Nepal and what was to be proposed for the Sri Lankan context.



Mr. Jayantha Nagendran visit to Nepal

A working project document was drafted complete with budget and deliverables based on the proposal submission made by SLF in Sri Lanka. Further work has since been completed towards a final contract between SLF and RERED which also contains HLF technical assistance for replication of HELP™ in Sri Lanka.

Once again, both organizations expressed their desire to support the HELP™ program adaptation and informed us of their open rolling admissions for project submission.

HLF and SLF met on the issue of furthering and enhancing of the South Asia regional NGO consortium and discussed on the next activity set for the consortium based on the outputs of this section of the consortium's work.

In the first round Sewa Lanka Foundation received US\$ 2400 and Tarayana Foundation received US\$ 2000 from SARI/E. Both SLF and TF presentations contained sections on what they had obtained from the initial SARI Energy funded portion of the consortium program and also what they wished to see in further consortium activities. These are enumerated briefly below:

What the consortium has offered so far for the Partners:

- Project adaptation consultancy to help include RETs into poverty alleviation programs
- A platform for learning innovative approaches towards community development
- Assistance in liaison with local and international donors
- Hands-on training for social mobilization, product development, marketing, innovative RET-linked micro-finance system, income generation using RETs
- A window into strategic developmental uses of Solar
- Ability to learn from best practices in the region and overcoming field challenges in similar terrain
- A valuable forum for learning about productive end-uses of RETs in the region

What Partners hope from the consortium in the future:

- Project proposal development for additional RET projects that also alleviate poverty
- Collaborative RET dissemination / poverty reduction program operation with SLF and HLF
- Additional training for field and management staff in RETs for poverty reduction
- Product design and quality control training
- Marketing of village HELP™ products internationally
- RET energy security project development for conflict resettlement areas in the northern and eastern regions
- Access to RET technical and managerial support for project implementation
- Assistance to voice opinions to donors on how best to take advantage of NGO's field presence
- Technical transfer for solar water purification (SPOWTS™)
- Guidance and inputs for project formulation
- Further experience sharing on best practices and mistakes
- Technical assistance for RET logistics

- Support to observe adaptability and replication process of the programs in the Sri Lankan context
- Additional training for social mobilization staff

SARI Performance Indicators

I: Enhanced Policy

- Both NGOs have made policy decision progress to adapt RETs in their developmental works
- Donors in both countries eager to fund innovative projects

II: Increased Commitment

- MoUs signed with all partners to launch programs that intrinsically use RETs to reduce poverty
- Proposals drafted and submitted for actual fund mobilization

III: Broader Participation on Energy Cooperation

- NGO Consortium established for increased RET use and regional experience sharing
- RET micro-finance staff trained for regional replication.

The Sri Lankan GEF / SGP meeting revealed greater detail about GEF / SGP norms for project focus, climate change issues, existing programs covering similar topics and issues and finally the methods for proposal submission. Revised information was made available as to what aspects of the project GEF could support

As a total of four proposals were submitted to various donors for continued project replication and consortium activity continuation, the consortium now awaits donor response to their rolling admissions. It was agreed that once contracted with the donors that actual HELP™ project replication would commence early in 2005.

4.4 Bhutan:

Tarayana Foundation Meeting:

A letter was received from Tarayana Foundation after their trip to Kathmandu for workshop, field exposure and trainings requesting further assistance from HLF and so the final follow-up meeting was held at Tarayana Foundation (TF) offices in Thimpu to determine the next steps.

The Tarayana Foundation continued work on program adaptation and collaboration formulation and how to define the organization's next year's activities. As the organization is currently in the process of defining its next year's programs, the HLF presentation and stakeholder's meeting was timely.

The group felt the need to further reflect and confer among themselves about their wishes in the formation of the consortiums further activities but had now established their interest in what the consortium was continuing to offer TF in terms of program design, collaboration for implementation and technical assistance. The group had now brought

HLF program element adaptation into their discussions and voiced their request to commence proposal design for two programs, RE-TEC™ for Bhutan and HELP™ element for their commenced village work in the eastern region of Bhutan.

On this visit the TF team showed renewed and clear interest in adapting the HELP™ modality and also announced the three villages they wished to see proposals drafted for.

Further meetings were sought with the Government of Bhutan's existing solar electrification program but the concerned officials were out of station

4.5 UNV Meeting:

A meeting was held between HLF representative and the Bhutan government's ministry of trade and industry for their E-Business program in conjunction with UNV of Bhutan. Several similar objectives were found between the organizations and a general discussion ensued for pursuing joint works as both organization's projects matured. Further details of this can be found in the second to last HLF report to SARI Energy on the consortium work.

4.6 Overall proposals submitted and status as of February 2005:

1) Submission accomplished to RERED Sri Lanka

The proposal has passed through the first round of contract refinement and the acceptance and final contracting could be said to be a "fait accompli". Proposal awaits GEF SGP Sri Lankan proposal approval for implementation. Total RERED portion for HELP replication in Sri Lanka: approximately \$49,000

2) Concept level and detailed level submissions made to GEF / SGP Sri Lanka

The proposal has passed through one round of approval process within the Sri Lankan National Steering Committee meeting and has come back with several comments and suggestions for changes. Process continues locally with the SLF consortium partner. Approval highly likely within one or two months. Total GEF SGP Sri Lankan portion for HELP replication in Sri Lanka: approximately \$49,550.00.

3) Concept and detailed level submissions completed to GEF Regional awaits approval by Sri Lankan National Steering Committee and Bhutan National Steering Committee. Total GEF REGIONAL portion for HELP™ and RE-TEC™ replication in Sri Lanka with additional Bhutan technology exposure: approximately \$149,881.00

4) RE-TEC™ program replication for Sri Lanka submitted to SARI Energy (now approved and contract signed between SARI Energy and two partners: HLF and SLF respectively) Total SARI Energy portion for RE-TEC replication in Sri Lanka is US\$ 12,150.00

5) One RE-TEC™ Bhutan proposal was submitted for adaptation to the country of Bhutan as such a proposal was favored by TF board members. HELP™ program submission not yet completed. Total GEF-SGP Bhutan portion for RE-TEC replication, approximately US\$ 30,195.00

Conclusion:

In order for partnering organizations to formulate, draft and submit collaborative program implementation proposals to any donor, a substantial amount of organizational objective overlap and organizational commitment is required. The formulation, drafting and submission of the above proposals is therefore a very clear indication of the success of the newly formed consortium to sustain its activities towards its final goal of actual program replication to enhance RET use for poverty alleviation and energy security among vulnerable populations.

The far distance which the proposals have been able to pipeline (some having already been signed or approved) since their submissions several months ago is indicative of ample donor interest in these proposals and bode extremely well for the continuance of the consortium activities as projected.

5. General Conclusions:

The Country of Bhutan required a different approach than Sri Lanka due to the closeness of the partner NGO to the government and the need to work closely with related government departments, keeping them informed as ideas and strategies were developed. This requirement availed several stakeholder departments for the various program operations. Many of the meetings revealed keen interest in the proposed programs as well as suggestions on how the government departments could contribute as partners in the proposed projects. This meeting process therefore took various government bodies and existing programs into consideration for further linkages and collaborations.

Both partner organizations have now come far along the path of becoming informed about various programs which linked RETs to important social concerns such as income generation and energy education. Substantial work has now been accomplished towards actual adaptations and replications and most importantly a genuine synergy has now developed between consortium members with a strong commitment to move forward with project proposals for joint implementation, training, technical assistance and furthering the general activities of the consortium.

Due to the volume of resolved proposals submitted, it is anticipated that the consortium and its newly established activities will continue well into 2006 and result in the actual commencement of HELP™, Solar Sisters™ and RE-TEC™ in Sri Lanka, and HELP™ and RE-TEC™ in Bhutan.

PARTNERS ORGANISATIONS REPORT

Sewalanka Foundation – Sri Lanka

Tarayana foundation - Bhutan



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**The Himalayan Light foundations' South Asia Regional NGO
consortium for RETs and Poverty Alleviation
Third Quarter (final) Report (Sri Lanka Section for
Work carried out through to October 30th, 2004)**

1.0 (A) SSP Project replication in Sri Lanka

1. Several communications were carried out between SLF and HLF to form the Consortium. The persons involved were Mr. Adam Friedensohn, Ms. Sapana Shakya, Mr. Lal Fernando, and Mr. Harsha Kumara Navaratne (Chairman SLF).
2. MoU was signed between the two Organizations.
3. Three project locations were identified i.e. Upatissagama, Kudawa and Kongahamula as the starting point for SSP.
4. Inspection of two sites and brief meeting with communities were done with the HLF Delegation.
5. Upatissagama was budgeted according to guidelines of HLF and forwarded to HLF for finalization.
6. Details of the cultural and environmental sites which are close to the identified sites were also furnish to HLF.
7. All three sites are now in the Web site of SSP.

2.0 (B1) The Consortium Workshop

The traditional Sri Lankan oil lamp was light to signify the successful commencement of the Consortium in Sri Lanka. This was performed by the combination of the invitees from private sector RET equipment dealers, bankers, donors and main consortium partners.

After self-introduction of the participants the meeting and consortium objective was explained by Mr. Adam to the participants.

The next item was the presentation of Ms. Sapana of Himalayan Light Foundation (HLF) the team leader. She had explained very clearly but briefly about their success stories in Nepal in Solar PV. That had cleared most of the doubts in the minds of participants about the feasibility of the HELP and SSP programs in Sri Lanka

This was followed up by a presentation of the proposed Home Employment and Lighting Package (HELP™) and the Solar Sisters Program (SSP™) and possible cooperation with

the Sewa Lanka Foundation (SLF). This presentation was given by Lal Fernando with the help of a power point presentation framework established by the consortium.

Mr. Fernando's presentation described the normal activities of SLF and future intended activities in the country especially in regards to using RETs for poverty reduction and vital service provision. The participants were very much interested since SLF has a strong network in North and East of the country where greatly expanded development is planned.

The 3rd presentation was from Mr. Friedensohn. He explained how HLF could assist us to adapt or replicate some of HLF's programs in Asia starting from Sri Lanka and Bhutan. He also added that these programs can be effectively replicated and also was very happy about the interest and support rendered by SLF for commencement of the programs. He also indicated it was rather difficult at the beginning of both these projects in Nepal too. But according to him with the experience gained in Nepal it will be much easier to replicate in Sri Lanka.

He also added that the present available programs of Solar PV had left the poorest people without energy service of any kind since they are cash poor but that HELP™ could potentially make solar home systems available to the poorest villagers as they could use their own village made products as the payback. Dealers were requested to direct these types of villagers to the SLF HELP™ program in the future.

The representative from the administration unit of the World Bank Funded RERED program had mentioned that these programs should have a market driven approach. If so they can be supported with RERED.

The UNDP GEF Small Grants representative added that she likes to see the organizations supported by the GEF SGP to be invited to the next workshop. She also indicated that lot of local crafts and materials projects are supported by SGP and had developed quality products for the market. They can help the proposed project to improve the quality of the products if necessary.

Mr. Lalith Gunaratne insisted that the Energy Forum should be included in the consortium. He also praised the SSP program according to him was a very innovative idea.

Mr Pradip Jayawardena, president of the Solar Industries Association in Sri Lanka, joined in with the idea of popularizing other products like water pumping and the refrigeration by further consortium activities.

All the participants were given a questionnaire to get their views at the end of the workshop.

The common request of the participants was that to hold the second workshop once the final project formulation with the site selection is done.

After the formal thanks giving speech by Lal Fernando the workshop concluded at 1415 hours followed by lunch.

2.0.1. Total attendance

1. Dealers – 5
2. Government Officers – 1
3. Bankers – 1
4. Donors – 2
5. Consultants – 1
6. SLF – 7

3.0.C) Replication of HELP Project

Few possible places were selected for the feasibility. The sites were from South Bordering Sinharaja Forest Reserve and From Central Province where few HH were available without lights.

Several discussions were held with the communities during which time SLF made villagers aware of the projects and how they could operate in their locations.

Representatives of RERED and GEF (SGP) were further engaged in their offices to seek funding for these proposed project replications.

Informal discussions were held with craft producers such as mat weavers to get assistance in quality improvements.

4.0.(D)The Visit To Nepal

4.0.1. Pre Visit to project Site

According to the plan the visit took place on 04th September 2004.

A visit took place to HLF office and the Lotus energy Office which sometimes supplies solar PV systems to HLF projects. Lotus Energy staff had arranged a tour of their factory premises and showed several types of creative end-uses for solar PV such as pumping, water purification, portable systems, etc. We were also joined by the Tarayana Foundation representative from Bhutan.

Tuesday we had presentations from HLF at The office on HELP site selection and SSP™ promotion. Presentations were shown by Mr. Samir and Mr. Suprabhat Basnyat. That gave us some insides of the Village Lekhani which we were planning to visit on Wednesday. During these presentations we received training on element of micro-financing for RETs in the scope of HELP™ program. Similarly, many parameters of SSP operation was discussed.

4.0.2. Project Visit

We flew to Pokhara on Wednesday morning and took a taxi to reach Baglung district headquarters by around 2:00PM.

The team visited the SDC office in Baglung where HLF does the quality monitoring and final packing of the hand made paper manufactured in Lekhani.

The planned project site visit was not possible due to security reasons. So HLF had arranged the Solar Development Committee (SDC) representatives to come to Baglung to meet us and this took place on Thursday.

A total of six villagers from the SDC visited us and we had a full 6 hour discussion. The way they talked about the business now had reminded us of big business tycoons planning for the profit increases. The transformation of the SDC from a mere collection of villagers to a businesspeople through HELP™ was really commendable. They had already planned to increase the production by locating more raw materials with cooperation of few villages near by. They have already showed their strength by obtaining a grant to their own SDC from GEF SGP for enhancing their program.

When discussing with the SDC members we found that the thinking of the people in Nepal or in Sri Lanka is almost the same.

The meeting increased my confidence to replicate a successful HELP™ project in Sri Lanka.

5.0.(B)The 2nd Consortium Meeting

This was done on 14th and was attended by most of the actors in Nepal Alternative Energy Promotion Center. After the introduction presentations were done in all three countries. The future activities of the Consortium was also discussed.

There was a clear indication of positive support by most of the Donor participants. It was a very well organized gathering and very interesting to meet these actors in various countries to enhance the knowledge. The next day took the return flight to Sri Lanka.

6.0. Mr. Friedensohn's 2nd visit on 23rd September 2004

On the 3rd day of the visit we met representatives from RERED and UNDP GEF / SGP. After few information sharing indicated to them that we will be forwarding a proposal to RERED and a Concept paper to UNDP GEF / SGP.

After five days of extensive work both targets were achieved and the proposals were handed over on 30th September 2004. Mr. Friedensohn left back to Nepal after having completed and finalizing all proposals with our SLF support staff.

7.0. Project Site

The HELP™ project site was finally selected that is bordering villages of Sinharaja Forest. Since SLF is already active in these villages and the national grid is not expected for several years to come, we selected this site for HELP™ project.

Preliminary visit was done in October and the people were very enthusiastic about the project. SLF held a meeting with the village leaders and they are keen to get the project and give fullest support to it.

We at SLF, as the receiving partner of this project in Sri Lanka hereby thank the SARI Energy program for the innovative funding extended to us and HLF to replicate these very interesting projects of Nepal into Sri Lanka.

It is very encouraging to see the funding of this nature which breaks away from the normal funding scenarios. Although the funding was small it clearly has the pump priming effect on these innovative type of projects and the cross border experience sharing. Actual effect of this starter funding from SARI will be seen when SLF get into full gear with project implementation of both HELP™ and SSP™.

We wish that SARI Energy Program will continue to support us in future when we request for funding new innovations and experience sharing.

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PARTNERS ORGANISATIONS REPORT



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The Himalayan Light foundations' South Asia Regional NGO consortium for RETs and Poverty Alleviation

Third Quarter (final) Report (Bhutan Section)

(July- Oct Follow up Report 2004)

General Description:

The South Asia Regional NGO Consortium for RETs and poverty reduction is aimed at bringing three NGOs from Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bhutan to share experiences, best practice, and to cross pollinate important successful RET dissemination programs.

Several meetings were held to familiarize the partner NGOs in detail on RET dissemination program when combined with income generation programs. The goal of such a project is to obtain adequate operational program design information and to be capable of replicating the program in Bhutan.

Our immediate objective was to finalize replication parameters and draft actual fundable proposals for submission for program replication commencement in Bhutan after we had adapted the program parameters for our own country context.

The meeting

After having had several meetings with Himalayan Light Foundation, Nepal and being exposed to their programs, the final follow up meeting took place in Bhutan. Mr. Adam Friedensohn from Himalayan Light Foundation came to Bhutan in October of 2004.

The meetings had a more familiar atmosphere this time and the TF board members were clearer about what they wanted from the consortium and Mr. Friedensohn knew better what HLF and the consortium could provide in the TF context. After extensive meetings and exposure presentations along with adequate time for questions and answers, the TF board became more open -minded to the potential benefits of the programs.

During the various meetings TF board members requested for further assistance from HLF for several program replications. They felt that though Tarayana could not replicate all the programs, HELP™ and RE-TEC™ were certainly programs that would be very good and possible to adopt to the Bhutanese context.

The Tarayana Foundation continued work on program adaptation and collaboration formulation and how to define the organization's next year's activities. As the organization is currently in the process of defining its next year's programs, the HLF presentation and stakeholder's meeting was timely.

The group felt the need to further reflect and confer among themselves about their wishes in the formation of the consortium's further activities but had now established their interest in what the consortium was continuing to offer TF in terms of program design, collaboration for implementation and technical assistance. The group had now brought HLF program element adaptation into their discussions and voiced their request to commence proposal design for two programs, RE-TEC™ for Bhutan and HELP™ element for their commenced village work in the eastern region of Bhutan.

Conclusions

HLF and Tarayana representatives also visited with several some stakeholders in Bhutan ranging from private sector offices in renewable energy and several government offices with likely overlapping concerns such as education, energy, internet sales, etc. and briefed these stakeholders on what Tarayana was about to implement. Most of these stakeholders were very keen on being a part of the projects.

Many of the meetings revealed keen interest in the proposed programs as well as suggestions on how the government departments could contribute as partners in the proposed projects. This meeting process therefore took various government bodies and existing programs into consideration for further linkages and collaborations.

The result of all these meetings is that HLF is helping Tarayana Foundation draw up a project proposals for the replication of HELP and the RE-TEC programs. Currently RE-TEC has been submitted to the TF board and the proposals will be ready for donor submission after review from the TF Board.

Abbreviations

AEPC	Alternative Energy Promotion Center
HMG/N	His Majesty's Government of Nepal
HLF	Himalayan Light Foundation
HELP	Home Employment and Lighting project
RETEC	Renewable Energy Traveling education Center
SARI/E	South Asia Regional Initiatives / Energy
SLF	Sewa Lanka Foundation – Sri Lanka
SSP	Solar Sisters Program
TF	Tarayana Foundation - Bhutan
WI	Winrock International

Annexes; Newsletter publication